

Helsingin yliopisto - Helsingfors universitet - University of Helsinki ID 2004-2919

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Työn nimi-Arbetets titel-Title Accession by the European Union to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: A study in the interaction between law and politics			
Oppiaine-Läroämne-Subject International Politics			
Työn laji-Arbetets art-Level Master's thesis		Aika-Datum-Month and year 2004-09-20	Sivumäärä-Sidantal-Number of pages 76
<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>This study analyses the debate about European Union accession to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR). On the one hand, the aim is to give an overview of the debate about accession and the background to the arguments used in the debate, on the other hand, to analyse the specific claims about accession and what they reveal about political interests. The research question is how legal arguments have been used in the accession debate to achieve political aims.</p> <p>The theoretical framework of this study is the interaction between law and politics. The accession debate is approached from the point of view of juridification of politics. Juridification of politics is a complex phenomenon that is seen as an interference of law into politics.</p> <p>Accession by the European Union to the ECHR would have a strong symbolical meaning and would send a political signal to the citizens of Europe and to the outside world that the protection of human rights extends to the whole Union. Accession would strengthen the credibility of the European Union as a global actor in human rights affairs. It would give a strong political signal of coherence between the European Union and the “greater Europe”. Finally, accession would give legitimacy for the Union and its policies.</p> <p>The debate about accession is part of a more general debate about the future of the European Union and the role of human rights. Accession by the European Union to the ECHR is seen as a step in developing the Union into a federal state and weakening the position of member states. Therefore the difference in the views of member states on accession can best be explained with the idea of a moving policy pendulum between intergovernmentalism and supranationalism.</p>			
Avainsanat-Nyckelord-Keywords European Convention on Human Rights European Union integration accession			
Säilytyspaikka-Förvaringsställe-Where deposited			
Muita tietoja-Övriga uppgifter-Additional information			